

Books to Honor Martin Luther King Jr.  
Aurora Ropp and Kris Wiley for The News Review

As we observe Martin Luther King Jr. Day this month, we encourage you to read books about and inspired by the Civil Rights icon. Roseburg Public Library has a number of titles for all ages, and we recommend these recent publications.

### **Beginning Readers**

"Martin Luther King Jr. Day" written by Margaret McNamara and illustrated by Mike Gordon is a clear short story engaging King's "I Have a Dream" speech with young people's concerns.

Robin Hill School students visit a museum and see King's image. A student and the teacher talk about King being a leader with big ideas. When the students return to their classroom, they discuss ideas for change that would make the world a better place. Children come up with ideas such as "no more fighting" illustrated by children getting along while sharing a swing.

The simple sentences and clear illustrations with children's ideas provide a good connection for young minds to King's dream for a better functioning society.

### **Middle Grades**

"Memphis, Martin, and the Mountaintop: The Sanitation Strike of 1968" written by Alice Faye Duncan and illustrated by R. Gregory Christie combines poetry, prose and beautiful illustrations to explain the last few weeks of King's life. The book, which includes a timeline and sources, is suitable for all junior readers.

Nine-year-old Lorraine tells the story of her family of three living in Memphis. Her father is a sanitation worker who joins his colleagues striking for safer conditions and fair treatment in winter 1968.

King traveled to Memphis to support the striking workers, and his presence amplified their calls for equal rights.

King was murdered on April 4, 1968, while standing on the balcony outside his room at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, the day after giving his famous "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech at Mason Temple.

The Lorraine Motel now houses the National Civil Rights Museum, where visitors can learn more about the sanitation strike and walk in King's footsteps. I visited the site in 2017, and it was deeply emotional and inspirational.

### **Young Adults**

"All You Have to Do" by Autumn Allen features a dual timeline in a story steeped in historical events. I suggest it for mature teens.

Gibran is finishing his senior year of high school in Boston in 1995, and he wants to lead a group of classmates to the Million Man March in Washington, D.C. When his teachers and administrators deny his request, Gibran pushes back, leading to difficult conversations about racism.

The other storyline begins in the immediate aftermath of King's assassination. Kevin, Gibran's uncle, is attending Columbia University as protests erupt, not only because of King's death but because of expansion plans by the school that encroach on the neighboring, mostly Black community.

There was a lot of tension throughout the book, which made the uplifting ending all the more satisfying.

All of these books are available at the library. Place holds at [roseburg.bibliionix.com](http://roseburg.bibliionix.com), or contact library staff at [library@cityofroseburg.org](mailto:library@cityofroseburg.org) or 541-492-7050 for assistance.

### This Month's Youth Programs

10:15 a.m. every Wednesday – Storytime with Aurora

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10 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 9 – Grab-and-go craft kits while supplies last

4-4:45 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 10 - Club de Idioma Español | Spanish Club for 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders

3:30-5 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 11 – Building & Legos for all ages

3-4 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 17 – STEAM program for elementary students

3-5 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 18 – Teen Volunteer Hours

10 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 23 – Grab-and-go craft kits while supplies last

4-4:45 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 24 - Club de Idioma Español | Spanish Club for 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders

3-4 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 25 – Seasonal kids crafts